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DAMAGE TO FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN THE SOUTH

Broadcast by E. J. Rowell, Agricultural Marketing Service, in the Department of Agriculture portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Tuesday, January 30, 1940.--over the NBC Blue Network

--ooOoo--

KADDERLY:

During the past 10 days we have given you a number of reports on the damage to fruit and vegetables caused by cold weather in the Southern States. Yesterday ---We spoke of the low temperatures that prevailed in Alabama and Florida over the Week end. Today E. J. Rowell, of Agricultural Marketing Service, is going to give us the very latest information on the freeze damage in Florida, Texas, and other Southern States, -- starting with the report from Florida.

ROWELL:

Practically all of the snap beans on the lower east coast and in the Everglades on the rim of Lake Okeechobee were destroyed. Cabbage in practically all sections was damaged. Shipments were heavy just before the cold weather, and salvage will continue on cabbage ready to cut at the time the freezing weather hit. Shipments of cabbage will be fairly heavy during the early part of this week. Celery was heavily damaged. This will mean a lot of stripping at time of harvest. The entire cucumber crop will have to be replanted. Winter plantings of egg plant were all killed. However the plantings were light. What was left of the green peas in the Everglades have been frozen. Shipments of this crop will be over by the end of the week.

Practically all of the peppers on the West Coast of Florida were killed. There will be few, if any, peppers available for market in that area during the next two months. The spring acreage which had been set in the Plant City section has also been killed. However, a small acreage of peppers in the Pampano section may not have been entirely killed, although they were badly damaged. Potatoes in Dade County which would have been ready for harvest about the middle of February, have been killed to the ground. The acreage was too old to expect any recovery. As a result, shipments will be limited to the few potatoes under the vines at the present time.

Strawberry shipments will be much smaller during the next 3 to 4 weeks due to the freezing of the berries and killing of the bloom. Tomato plants were completely killed in Martin, Broward, Dade and Collier Counties, -- we haven't heard whether or not the seed beds were saved. However, we do know that plants will be scarce, and farmers will be able to reset only a small percentage of the tomato acreage. This means no tomatoes will be available from Florida in the near future.

And finally, from Florida, watermelon vines have been killed and will have to be replanted.

KADDERLY:

Now from Texas.

ROWELL:

All spring crop snap beans that were up were killed, but most of the acreage will be replanted. Beet tops were badly damaged, but the roots escaped injury. Heavy loss to Bermuda onions is reported in the Coastal Bend and Wilson-Karnes area. Last week we said that a considerable quantity of cabbage heads were split by the freeze. This has been confirmed, and there will be about a 25 percent loss in cabbage shipments. Shipments of cabbage from Texas will be smaller in February, but apparently enough young plants survived to make possible a pretty good crop in March.

Green peas were killed to the ground, but the loss will not be very large because three fourths of the crop was harvested. Early potatoes in the Rio Grande Valley that were up, were killed to the ground. This means smaller yields. Spring crop tomatoes in the Rio Grande Valley were also killed. Growers say they are going to replant, but the final acreage will of course be smaller than originally planted. That seems to cover the highlights from Texas.

KADDERLY:

And the reports from other States---other than Florida and Texas.

ROWELL:

Just this. Most of the cabbage in the Mobile district of Alabama was destroyed when the temperature dropped to 14 yesterday. If growers can get the plants, a lot of the acreage will be replanted. In Tennessee the cabbage plants are still in hot beds and probably were not seriously hurt. No great loss to strawberries is reported in Tennessee.

KADDERLY:

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